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ABSTRACT

This investigation was designed to determine the frequency and extent of student unrest during the 1968-1969 academic year and to identify possible causal factors. The sample consisted of 382 colleges and universities which responded to a questionnaire concerned with the incidence of protest, their mode, the issues involved, the immediate consequences and any institutional changes occurring during the academic year. It was found that 22% of the institutions in the country had disruptive protests. The most frequent modes of protest were the occupation of buildings and disruption of school functions, and of the violent modes, damage to buildings and marches involving physical violence occurred most frequently. There was some relationship between issue and tactics and there was a general tendency toward "protest-proneness" at institutions which lacked cohesiveness and showed little regard for the students' welfare. Legal consequences and institutional discipline were almost entirely a response to violent tactics but legal action was more likely to occur when tactics were extreme, while increases in student power occurred independent of tactics. Various hypotheses were suggested for these findings. (RSM)

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Campus Disruption, 1968-1969: An Analysis of Causal Factors [1]

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The increasing intensity and frequency of campus unrest during the past academic year has generated great national disquietude, reflected in public statements by academicians, students, and others, as well as in several bills proposed recently in the state legislatures and the national Congress. The high level of tension and emotionality expressed by all parties concerned with campus unrest suggests that an objective appraisal of the facts of the situation is needed. The study that I shall discuss today involves disruptions on the campus during the past academic year. Its major objectives were to determine the frequency and extent of student unrest and related events during the period and to identify possible causal factors in the student body, the administrative structure of the institution, the issues of the protest, and the protest tactics. This research was carried out in connection with a larger three-year national study of campus unrest being conducted by the American Council on Education and supported in part by a grant from the National Institute of Mental Health.

The data were collected by means of a questionnaire[2] mailed to a stratified national sample of 427 colleges and universities that have been participating in the Council's Cooperative Institutional Research Program, which is designed primarily to assess the impact of different college environments on the student's development.[3] After several follow-ups, we were able to obtain usable responses from 382 institutions, or

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nearly 90 percent of the sample originally polled. Designed to gather factual rather than subjective data, the questionnaire was concerned mainly with the incidence of protests, their mode, the issues involved, the immediate consequences, and any institutional changes which occurred during the same academic year.

The 382 responding colleges and universities were matched against the Council's master institutional file, which contains published information about the institution's administrative characteristics as well as data on its environmental attributes. In this way, it was possible to obtain complete data from a subsample of 200 institutions.

Mode of Protest

The questionnaire inquired as to whether the institution had experienced any of fourteen categories of protest tactics. For purposes of analysis, we identified six of these tactics as both disruptive and violent and an additional five as nonviolent but disruptive. Although we are conductiong analyses of nondisruptive and nonviolent forms of protest, this discussion focuses on protests that are either violent or disruptive; these are listed in Table 1. The table also gives the estimated frequency of occurrence for each type of incident in the institutional population during 1968-69. These weighted percentages are based on the Council stratification scheme for populations, which is designed to control error with respect to the type of institution, its quality, and its size.[4]

Note from Table 1 that a total of 22 percent of the institutions in the country experienced some kind of disruptive protest during the past academic year, but less than one-third of this total had violent protests. The most frequent modes of protest were the occupation of buildings and the interruption of school functions such as classes, speeches, or meetings. Of the violent modes, damage to buildings or furnishing and campus marches or rallies involving physical violence occurred most frequently.

By scanning the last column of percentages from Table 2 of the handout, one can see that the likelihood of disruptive protests varied markedly as a function of type of institution. None of the 25 two-year private colleges, for example, experienced disruptive protest, whereas 70 percent of the private universities experienced such protest. Incidents involving violence were also most likely to occur at the private universities. (It should be remembered, however, that disruptive protests also include all those classified as violent.) By comparing the pairs of percentages for any one type of institution, one can get a notion of its "proneness to violence." Nearly half of the disruptive protests in the private universities, for example, involved violence, whereas this was true for less than one-fourth of the disruptive protests occurring at private nonsectarian colleges.

In order to get a better picture of the causal factors involved in these various protest events, we conducted an extensive series of regression analyses, using the subsample of 200 institutions for which complete data on environment, administrative characteristics, and student characteristics were available from earlier ACE research.

The first set--the results of which are shown in Table 3--involved possible relationships between issues and tactics. War-related protests included protests against the Vietnam war, U.S. military policy elsewhere, selective service policy, ROTC, military research, and recruiting by government or industry. Student power protests included demands for changes in parietal rules, disciplinary practices, and censorship policies, and demands for greater student participation in decision making and faculty evaluation, hiring, etc. Services to students include: quality of instruction, food, and physical facilities. Racial policies included protests for special educational programs for minority groups, for special admissions policies, and for the hiring of more minority group faculty members. While much finer distinctions are possible (some analyses involving more categories are currently in progress), we decided first to generate these broader groupings in order to increase the base rates of occurrence of various issues and tactics.

It should be pointed out that the Phi coefficients in Table 3 are highly affected by the base rates of occurrence of each tactic and each issue. Thus, the correlations involving the use of violence are small primarily because violent protest did not happen as often as either sit-ins or general disruption. The same is true for services to students, which were the least frequent issue of protest. The patterns of correlations do, however, manifest some relationships between issues and tactics not solely attributable to base rates. Violent incidents, for example, appear to have occurred most frequently in protests involving racial policy and were least likely in the case of protests involving services to students. In the regression analyses discussed below, some of these relationships appear even more clearly.

Our next set of analyses concerned causative institutional factors. Since earlier research[5] has shown that the occurrence of protest is highly dependent upon the characteristics of the students at an institution, we performed a series of stepwise regression analyses in which we first permitted all the measures of student characteristics to enter the regression analysis and then examined the partial correlations between protests and institutional characteristics.[6] The partial correlations are shown in Table 4. Apparently, institutions which experienced more disruptive and violent protests then would be anticipated from the characteristics of their entering students tended to be universities, co-educational colleges, and public colleges. Institutions that had fewer protests than one would expect from their student inputs tended to be four-year colleges, technical schools, liberal arts colleges, and private-nonsectarian colleges and to have environments characterized by a high degree of concern for the individual student. These findings suggest that campus unrest, at least that of a disruptive or violent nature, is in part a response to a feeling that the welfare of the individual student is slighted. Another possibility is that students feel freer to engage in violent or disruptive protest if their institution manifests little interest in their individual development.

Protest Issues

Table 5 shows the partial correlations between each of the four categories of issues and various institutional characteristics after control for differential student inputs to the 200 institutions. We have included in the table all institutional characteristics that were significantly correlated with at least one of the four. The patterns of

coefficients from issue to issue are almost identical, at least with respect to sign. This finding would indicate the existence of a general tendency toward "protest-proneness" at certain institutions, independent of the issue. War-related issues appear to be the best single indication of this tendency, since they are more highly correlated with institutional characteristics than are any of the other three types of issues. Paradoxically, issues concerning institutional services to students seem to be least dependent upon institutional characteristics.

The data in Table 5 indicate that protests against the Vietnam war or against other matters related to U.S. military policy were most likely to occur in universities, coeducational institutions, and public institutions. These same institutions tended to have environments which were incohesive; moreover, students and faculty had little involvement in the class, students were not on warm, friendly terms with the instructor, and they were not verbally aggressive in the class; finally, these institutions had relatively permissive policies concerning student drinking. Students in the protest-prone institutions tended to feel that there was little concern for their individual welfare but a high degree of school spirit and an emphasis on social activities. Once again, these data indicate that the emergence of protest--particularly against the Vietnam war and against racial policies--is in part a response to an environment which lacks cohesiveness (measured primarily by number of close friendships among the students) and which shows little regard for the student's welfare.

Community and Institutional Response to Protest
Issues and Tactics

A topic of great interest but one that has received very little systematic study so far is the nature of the institutional and community response t o student protest. By "response," I mean both immediate response, which is often disciplinary or even legalistic in nature, and more general institutional change that may result from protest. We conducted several regression analyses to examine these relationships.

In the first series, we were interested in two types of immediate response to protest behavior: "legal response" such as arrests and indictments of students by civil authorities; and "significant institutional response," which included dismissal or expulsion, suspension, probationary action, and withdrawal of financial aid from protestors. We did not include in this second category such relatively minor responses as reprimands.

Two somewhat different questions concerned us. The first was, what effects do tactics and issues have on legal and institutional discipline? The second was what institutional factors are related to legal or institutional discipline, independent of tactics or issues? Table 6 shows the independent effects of tactics and issues. What we did here was to regress the legal consequences and institutional discipline variables on student input characteristics, tactics, and issues. The values shown in the table are therefore the F ratios associated with each of these variables in the final regression equation. These F ratios are proportional to the unique contribution of each variable, in the sense that the residual sum of squares would be increased in proportion to a particular F ratio if that variable were removed from the final equation.

Clearly, legal consequences--that is, arrests or indictments by civil authorities--were almost entirely a response to violent tactics. The use of disruptive but nonviolent tactics, including sit-ins, had no direct relationship to arrest or indictment. Violence was also the only one of the various tactics related to institutional discipline, although the relationship was much weaker than in the case of legal consequences.

It is somewhat curious that, whatever the tactics used, legal action was more likely to result when the protest concerned the Vietnam war or some related issue relating to U.S. military policy. Perhaps this finding

reflects a bias on the part of civil authorities; it could also indicate that war-related protests are more apt to arouse public interest. The only other significant connection between issue and disciplinary response was that protests concerning the racial policy of the college were most likely to result in some sort of institutional discipline. Again, this finding is somewhat odd, considering that protest tactics have been statistically controlled. Several explanations can be offered. Perhaps racial protests involve levels of disruption or violence not reflected accurately in our measures. (The same argument could be made in the case of the effects of war-related issues on legal responses.) Another possibility is that institutions over-react, in terms of disciplinary procedures, when the protest involves demands for changes in racial policies. These alternative explanations provide challenging hypotheses for our future research.

The effects of institutional characteristics on legal and institutional discipline are shown in Table 7. Again, it is important to note that, in arriving at these partial correlations, we have controlled for student inputs, tactics, and issues. Legal action was more likely to result in public institutions and in institutions located outside the Western states. Officials at public institutions may be more inclined to call in the police, perhaps because of the closer connection between public institutions and civil authorities necessitated by the nature of institutional control. Whatever the explanation, the law seems to be unevenly applied in the case of protest in public versus private institutions.

Our next series of analyses dealt with substantive changes in institutional policy during the year surveyed. We developed two major

categories of institutional changes, those concerning racial policies and those concerning increases in student power. The first category comprised the establishment of black studies programs or departments, the institution of special admissions programs for minority group members, and efforts to hire more black faculty. Increases in student power were defined as liberalization of parietal rules, increased student representation on existing committees or other policy bodies in the institutions, and miscellaneous other changes in institutional rules and regulations governing students. Not included were minor changes in institutional policy such as the formation of special study groups or ad hoc committees involving students.

Table 8 shows the independent effects of protest tactics and issues on these two types of institutional change. It is interesting to note that disruptive and violent tactics, as opposed to sit-ins, were related to changes in racial policies. The same was not true of increases in student power, which occurred independent of protest tactics. Institutions seem more willing to make concessions to black students if their tactics are extreme. Or possibly, as was suggested before, protests over racial policies involve degrees of disruption or violence not measured well enough in our crude dichotomies.

As would be expected, changes in racial policies were directly related to protests over that issue. Of special interest here, protests in response to previous institutional handling of protest (the last item in Table 8) were also related to changes in institutional racial policies. In addition, it is important to note that protests over racial policies seem to be in competition with protests over other institutional policies. Thus, when protest is concerned with student power or institutional

services to students, the institution is less likely to change its racial policies than where there are no such protests. In this sense, our data indicate that protests about institutional policies other than those concerning race are a kind of diversion.

Table 9 shows the partial correlations between institutional characteristics and the two types of institutional changes, after control of student inputs, protest tactics, and protest issues. It appears that universities are changing their racial policies at a much slower rate than four-year colleges, considering the type and frequency of protest that they encounter. No institutional characteristic, however, was related to changes in student power, which suggests that different types of institutions are making such changes at about the same rate and in proportion to the amount of protest activity they experience. It should be clear from Table 8, however, that increases in student power were directly related to the occurrence of protest and were more likely to occur in institutions where there were such protests than in institutions where there were not.

Although our findings show clearly that the university was more likely to experience protest than were other types of institutions and that they were apparently less responsive to such protest, some interesting alternative hypotheses were suggested by some additional analyses.

One of these analyses was based on the fact that the percentage of blacks in the student body was not related to the occurrence of protest concerning racial policies. To explore this question further, we eliminated the predominantly black colleges from our sample (no such protests had occurred at these institutions) and computed the correlation between the percentage of black students and the occurrence of black protest at the

predominantly white colleges. We obtained a very low correlation, indicating at best a trivial relationship.

Our findings with the universities, however, suggested a different possibility: namely, that it is not the percentage of black students that matters so much as their absolute numbers. Thus, given a sufficient number of black students, an institution is more likely to experience black protest than not, regardless of its size and other attributes. To explore this hypothesis, we plotted the likelihood that protests involving racial policies would occur as a function of the absolute number of blacks enrolling in the college. The results of this analysis are shown in Table 10. Note that as the absolute number of blacks enrolling in the college increases, so does the likelihood of black protest. Assuming that we could develop an appropriate method for scaling the number of blacks, it should be possible to obtain a substantial correlation between these two variables. We are currently attempting to develop such metrics, which we shall then apply to cross-validation samples in order to avoid the old problem of the "foldback" design.

In brief, the data in Table 10 suggest that the apparent effects of universities on the occurrence of protest may result in part from their sheer size: The larger the institution, the more likely it will have a "critical mass" of students who can organize a protest. This suggestion is, of course, rival to the hypothesis stated earlier about the university's impersonal atmosphere and lack of concern for the individual student. Within the next year, we hope to gain more insight into the relative validity of these opposing hypotheses by analysis of data on independent samples.

Table 1

Estimated Number of U.S. Institutions Experiencing Incidents of Violent or Disruptive Protests: 1968-1969 Academic Year

Protest Incident	Institution at Which Incident Occurred N	Percent of Population
Violent		
Burning of building by protestors	43	1.8
Breaking or wrecking of building or furnishings	80	3.4
Destruction of records, files, papers	21	0.9
Campus march, picketing, or rally with physical violence	62	2.6
One or more persons killed	8	0.3
Some persons injured	45	1.9
TOTAL OF INSTITUTIONS EXPERIENCING VIOLENT PROTESTS	145	6.2
Disruptive (nonviolent)		
Building or section of building occupied	275	11.7
Entrance to building barred by protestors	83	3.5
Officials held 'captive' by protestors	24	1.0
Interruption of school function (e.g., classes, speech, or meeting)	260	11.1
General campus strike or boycott of school function	141	6.0
TOTAL OF INSTITUTIONS EXPERIENCING DISRUPTIVE OR VIOLENT PROTESTS	524	22.4

Note: Data have been adapted from Bayer, A. E., and Astin, A. W. op. cit.

Table 2

Incidence of Major Campus Protest Activity, 1968-1969

Type of Institution	Number in Sample	Number in Population	Estimated % of Total Population With Violent Protests	Estimated % of Total Population With Disruptive Protests
Public universities	54	244	13.1	43.0
Private universities	28	61	34.4	70.5
4-year public colleges	44	336	8.0	21.7
4-year private non-sectarian colleges	85	411	7.3	42.6
4-year Protestant colleges	49	292	1.7	17.8
4-year Roman Catholic colleges	43	234	2.6	8.5
2-year private colleges	25	226	0.0	0.0
2-year public colleges	54	538	4.5	10.4
TOTAL	382	2342	6.2	22.4

Note: Data have been adapted from Bayer, A. E., and Astin, A. W. op. cit.

Table 3

Correlations* Between Protest Issues and Protest Tactics
(N = 200 Institutions)

Tactic	Issue			
	War-Related	Student Power	Services to Students	Racial Policies
Disruption**	.51	.51	.31	.49
Violence	.29	.25	.13	.33
Sit-in	.44	.39	.22	.46

* Phi coefficients

** Includes violence and sit-ins.

Table 4

Partial Correlations Between Protest Tactics and Institutional Characteristics, After Control for Student Input Characteristics

Institutional Characteristics	Partial Correlation With Occurrence of	
	Disruptive Protest	Violent Protest
University	.22**	.28**
Four-year college	-.19**	-.30**
Coeducational college	.25**	.16*
Technical school	-.20**	-.10
Liberal arts college	-.07	-.21**
Private and nonsectarian college	-.05	-.17*
Public college	.10	.22*
Concern for the individual student (ICA factor)	-.13	-.19

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$

Table 5

Partial Correlations Between Protest Issues and Institutional Characteristics, After Control for Student Input Characteristics (N = 200 Institutions)

Institutional Characteristics	Protest Issue: War-Related	Student Power	Racial Policies	Services to Students
University	.32**	.24**	.20**	.18**
4-year college	-.19**	-.16*	-.16*	-.13
2-year college	-.14*	-.10	-.04	-.05
Men's college	-.19**	-.13	-.11	-.06
Coeducational college	.20**	.17*	.15*	.10
Liberal arts college	-.10	-.08	-.14*	-.05
Public	.19**	.05	.13	.02
ICA Factors				
Cohesiveness	.19**	-.09	-.17*	-.06
Use of the library	-.19**	-.11	-.07	.02
Involvement in the class	-.30**	-.10	-.09	-.08
Verbal aggressiveness	-.22**	-.01	.02	-.02
Extraversion of the instructor	-.18**	.00	.03	.05
Familiarity with the instructor	-.16*	-.05	-.05	-.04
Severity of policies against drinking	-.23**	-.09	-.13	-.05
Concern for the individual student	-.28**	-.12	-.09	-.12
School spirit	.23**	.09	.24**	-.01
Emphasis on social life	.18**	.04	.15*	.03
Permissiveness	.14	.11	.17*	.06

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 6

Effects of Protest Tactics and Protest Issues on Legal Consequences and Institutional Discipline, After Control for Student Input (N = 200 Institutions)

	Legal Consequences (Arrests/Indictments)	Institutional Discipline
Independent Effects[a] of Tactics		
Disruption	-.03	+1.5
Violence	+44.9**	+4.2*
Sit-ins	0.0	-1.3
Independent Effects[a] of Issues		
War-Related	+3.9*	+1.6
Student Power	+0.7	+0.6
Services to Students	-2.5	-0.2
Racial Policies	+1.8	+12.8**
Nonresponse to Previous Protests	+2.1	+1.0

[a] F-ratios are those associated with unique or independent contribution of each variable to the reduction of residual sums of squares in the final regression equation. Sign of the final regression coefficient is shown before each F-ratio.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 7

Partial Correlations of Institutional Characteristics With Legal Consequences and Institutional Discipline, Independent of Student Inputs, Protest Tactics, and Protest Issues
(N = 200 Institutions)

Institutional Characteristics	Partial Correlation With Legal Consequences (Arrests/Indictments)	Partial Correlation With Institutional Discipline
Western region	-.16*	-.06
Public control	+.27**	.05
Private and nonsectarian	-.17*	.06
ICA Factors		
Verbal aggressiveness	-.16*	-.11
Familiarity with the instructor	-.14*	-.09
Concern for the individual student	-.17*	+.03
School spirit	+.16*	+.04
Cooperativeness	+.07	+.16*
Emphasis on athletics	+.11	+.17*

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 8

Effects of Tactics and Issues on Changes in Institutional Policy

	Type of Change	
	Racial Policies	Increased Student Power
Independent Effects[a] of Tactics		
Disruption	+ 3.9*	+0.6
Violence	+ 2.8	- 2.2
Sit-ins	- 3.9*	- 0.8
Independent Effects[a] of Issues		
War-Related	- 2.3	+ 2.1
Student Power	- 4.8*	+14.5**
Services to Students	- 5.3*	+ 5.6*
Racial Policies	+33.1**	0.0
Nonresponse to Previous Protests	+ 8.0**	+ .1

[a] F-ratios are those associated with unique or independent contribution of each variable to the reduction of residual sums of squares in the final regression equation. Sign of the final regression coefficient is shown before each F-ratio.

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 9

Partial Correlations of Institutional Characteristics With Changes in Institutional Policy, Independent of Student Inputs, Protest Tactics, and Protest Issues

Institutional Characteristics	Type of Change: Racial Policies	Type of Change: Increased Student Power
University	-.34**	.00
4-year college	+.20**	+.01
Size	-.20**	-.02
Art School	+.17*	+.06
ICA Factors		
Verbal aggressiveness	+.19**	-.01
Concern for the individual student	+.15*	-.01
Involvement in the class	+.20	-.01

* $p < .05$.

** $p < .01$.

Table 10

Racial Protests in 1968-69 as a Function of Freshman Black Student Enrollment in Fall, 1968
(N = 185 Institutions)

Number of Blacks in Fall, 1968 Entering Freshman Class	Number of Institutions*	Percent Institutions Experiencing Protests Involving Racial Policies During 1968-1969
0 - 1	33	6.1
2 - 4	34	17.6
5 - 9	39	25.6
10 - 29	60	36.7
30 or more	19	52.6
Total	185	27.0

* Six predominantly black colleges have been removed from the sample.

FOOTNOTES

[1]Presented at the American Psychological Association Meeting, Washington, D. C., September 1, 1969. This research is supported by Grant 1 R12 MH17, 084-01 from the National Institute of Mental Health and by general funds from the American Council on Education.

[2]Detailed tabulations of the data from this survey have been presented in an earlier report: Bayer, A. E., and Astin, A. W. "Campus Disruption During 1968-1969," ACE Research Reports, Vol. 4, No. 3, 1969, and Educational Record, in press.

[3]For a fuller description of the program, see Astin, A. W., Panos, R.J., and Creager, J. A. "A Program of Longitudinal Research on the Higher Educational System," ACE Research Reports, Vol. 1, No. 1, 1966.

[4]For a description of the sampling design, see Creager, J. A., "General Purpose Sampling in the Domain of Higher Education," ACE Research Reports, Vol. 3, No. 2, 1968.

[5]See Astin, A. W., "Personal and Environmental Determinants of Student Activism," Measurement and Evaluation in Guidance, Vol. 1, No. 3, Fall 1968.

[6]The student characteristics that predicted the occurrence of disruptive or violent protests were similar to those identified in previous research: a high proportion of nonreligious and Jewish students, a low rate of conventional religious behaviour, and a high degree of interest in musical and artistic activities.